

# Ashwini Ashokkumar

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Stanford University  
 Stanford, CA 94306

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

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| <b>Assistant Professor</b><br>(starting Fall 2023) | <b>New York University</b><br>Department of Psychology |
| <b>Postdoctoral Fellow</b><br>(09/21 – present)    | <b>Stanford University</b><br>PI: Dr. Robb Willer      |

## EDUCATION

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|---|---|
| <b>Ph.D., Psychology</b><br>(2021)                        | <b>The University of Texas at Austin</b><br>PIs: Dr. William Swann Jr. and Dr. James Pennebaker |
| <b>M.A., Liberal Arts</b><br>(2016)                       | <b>Ashoka University, India</b><br>PIs: Dr. Kai Qin Chan and Dr. Neil Lutsky                    |
| <b>B.Tech., Computer Science &amp; Engineering</b> (2012) | <b>Amrita School of Engineering, India</b><br>PI: Dr. Vidhya Balasubramaniam                    |





## PUBLICATIONS

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† indicates undergraduate student author

### JOURNAL ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

- Voelkel, J., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Willenbring, J., Malhotra, N., & Willer, R. (under review). A Large Experimental Test of the Most Cited Climate Change Messages.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, & Pennebaker, J. W., (2022). Tracking group identity through natural language within groups. *PNAS Nexus*. [🔗](#) [\[OSF\]](#)
- Ashokkumar, A.**, & Swann Jr, W. B. (2022). Restoring Honor by Slapping or Disowning the Daughter. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. [🔗](#) [\[OSF\]](#)
- Boyd, R. L., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Seraj, S., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2022). The Development and Psychometric Properties of LIWC-22. [🔗](#)
- Tanjitpiyanond, Jetten, Peters, **Ashokkumar**, et al., (2022). A 32-society investigation of how perceived economic inequality shapes social class stereotyping, *European Journal of Social Psychology*.
- Kennedy, B., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Boyd, R., & Dehghani, M. (2022). Text-analysis methods for research in Psychology. In Boyd, R., & Dehghani, M. (Ed.), *The Atlas of Language Analysis in Psychology*. Guilford Press. [🔗](#)
- Ashokkumar, A.**, & Pennebaker, J. W. (2021). Social media conversations reveal large psychological shifts caused by COVID-19's onset across US cities. *Science Advances*, 7(39). [🔗](#) [\[OSF\]](#)
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Talaifar, S., Fraser, W. T., Landabur, R., Buhrmester, M., Gómez, Á., Paredes, B., & Swann Jr, W. B. (2020). Censoring political opposition online: Who does it and why. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 91, 104031. [🔗](#) [\[OSF\]](#)
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2020). How self-verification strivings can sabotage the effects of praise. In Brummelman, E. (Ed.) (2020), *Psychological perspectives on praise*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. [🔗](#)

- \*Talaifar, S., \***Ashokkumar, A.**, Pennebaker, J. W., Medrano, F. N., Yeager, D. S., & Swann Jr, W. B. (2020). A New Pathway to University Retention? Identity Fusion With University Predicts Retention Independently of Grades. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 1948550619894995. \***shared first authorship**  [\[OSF\]](#)
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Galaif, M., <sup>†</sup> & Swann Jr, W. B. (2019). Tribalism can corrupt: Why people denounce or protect immoral group members. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 85, 103874.  [\[OSF\]](#)
- Bastian, B., Vauclair, C. M., Loughnan, S., Bain, P., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Becker, M., ... & Swann, W. B. (2019). Explaining illness with evil: pathogen prevalence fosters moral vitalism. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 286(1914), 20191576. 
- Sparks, A. M., Fessler D. M.T., Chan, K. Q., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Holbrook, C. (2018). Disgust as a Mechanism of Decision Making Under Risk. *Emotion*. 
- Lutsky, N., & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2017). Internationalizing the Personality Psychology Course. In G. Rich, U. P. Gielen, and H. Takooshian (Eds.), *Internationalizing the Teaching of Psychology*.

### MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

- Ashokkumar, A.** & Talaifar, S., The consequences of self-censorship online.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Carvalho, C., Horn, A., Jung, H., Meier, T., Ozdemir, F., Pizarro, J., Paez, D., Petters, N., Strojny, P., Vergani, L., Yogo, M., ... Pennebaker, J. W. (in prep). A longitudinal exploration of social life during COVID-19 in 25 countries.
- Ashokkumar, A.** Ozdemir, F., & Swann, W.B. Jr. (in prep). When Conservatives are as welcoming of refugees as Liberals: The case of Turkey.
- Seraj, S., Weyland, A., <sup>†</sup> **Ashokkumar, A.**, Mihalcea, R., Pennebaker, J. W. (in prep). [The Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 led to decreased preoccupation with the pandemic.
- Blackburn, K., Olivarez, O., <sup>†</sup> Brody, N., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Pennebaker, J. W. (in prep). We win some, they lose some: A replication and conceptual extension of Cialdini's BIRG.
- Martel, F., Moniz, P., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Swann Jr, W. B. (in prep). Identity fusion and support for authoritarianism in the run-up to the US insurrection
- Martel, F., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Swann Jr, W. B. (in prep). Fear of robots foments fascism among strongly fused Trump supporters.
- Castillo, V., Cross, S. E., McCauley, T., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Perez, M. A. (under review). A cultural perspective on forgiveness among Latinx and Northern European Americans.

### HONORS & FUNDING

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|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 2021        | SPSP Student Publication Award  |
| 2017 – 2021 | Graduate School Professional Development Award, UT Austin               |
| 2018 – 2019 | PEO International Peace Scholarship                                     |
| 2018 – 2019 | Graduate Dean's Prestigious Fellowship Supplement Award                 |
| 2018        | Pennebaker Social Psychology Fellowship                                 |
| 2016        | SPSP Diversity Travel Award   |
| 2015        | Nominated for the best research project award, Ashoka University, India |
| 2014 – 2015 | Young India Fellowship, Ashoka University                               |
| 2012        | Nominated for the Best Capstone Project Award, Amrita University, India |

### TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

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<sup>†</sup> indicates undergraduate student presenter

## CHAired SYMPOSIA

**Ashokkumar, A.** & Talaifar, S. (2021). *Crises Through New Lenses: Studying COVID with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology*. Symposium to be chaired at the Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Virtual.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (forthcoming in 2023). *Tracking group identity through natural language within groups*. Association for Psychological Science (APS), Washington, D. C. [Symposium Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (forthcoming in 2023). *How large-scale cultural upheavals change thinking patterns*. Historical Psychology Preconference, Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Atlanta. [Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2022). *Psychological Certainty in Partisan Communities*. Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Virtual/San Francisco. [Symposium Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2021). *The Psychological Unfolding of the COVID-19 outbreak: Shifts in Emotions, Cognitions, and Social Connections*. Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Virtual. [Symposium Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Talaifar, S., & Swann, W.B. Jr (2021). *Political Censorship in the Digital Age*. Psychology of Media & Technology Preconference, Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Virtual [Data-bluetooth]
- Pennebaker, J.W. & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2020). *Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Impact of COVID-19: The First Three Months*. UT COVID-19 Conference, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2020). *The Psychological Unfolding of the COVID-19 outbreak: Shifts in Emotions, Cognitions, and Social Connections*. Social Bridges E-Conference, Virtual. [Presentation]
- Pennebaker, J.W. & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2020). *Emotions and Language in the Real World*. UbiCOMP, Virtual. [Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** Ozdemir, F., & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2019). *When Conservatives are as Tolerant as Liberals*. International Convention of Psychological Science, Paris. [Symposium Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2019). *Rethinking Groups: The Interplay between the Individual and the Group*. Psychology of Language Preconference, Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Portland. [Presentation]
- Pennebaker, J.W., **Ashokkumar, A.** Seraj., S., & Boyd, R. *Identity and Social Dynamics*. (2019). 11th Triennial Invitational Choice Symposium. [Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2018). *Restoring Honor by Slapping the Daughter*. Cultural Psychology Preconference, Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Atlanta. [Data-bluetooth]
- Talaifar, S., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Sarma, S.<sup>†</sup>, & Swann, W.B., Jr (2018). *Identity fusion, Wellbeing, and Academic Performance among International & Domestic Students*. Happiness & Wellbeing Preconference, Society for Personality & Social Psychology convention, Atlanta. [Data-bluetooth]

## INVITED TALKS

- Ashokkumar, A.** (2022). *The Psychological Roots of Digital Echo Chambers: Understanding Political Polarization in the Digital Age*. Department of Psychology, Carleton College.
- Ashokkumar, A.** (2022). *The Psychological Roots of Digital Echo Chambers*. Emerging Scholars Speaker Series. Department of Psychology, New York University.

- Pennebaker, J. W., & **Ashokkumar, A.** *What I Think About When I Think About Thinking*. Language as a Window into Mind and Society, Santa Fe Institute Working Group Meeting.
- Ashokkumar, A.** (2022). *Exploring the Psychological Roots of Echo Chambers*. Social Psychology Seminar. University of Illinois Chicago.
- Ashokkumar, A.** (2022). *The Psychological Unfolding of COVID-19: Insights from Social Media Language and Large-scale Survey Data*. Virtual Speaker Series. Department of Psychological Sciences, Ball State University.
- Ashokkumar, A.** (2022). Invited discussant for “Democracy lives in darkness” by Emily Van Duyn at the PACS Book Festival at Stanford University.
- Ashokkumar, A.** (2021). *Exploring Group Dynamics “In The Wild”*. Marketing Seminar, Simon Fraser University.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Talaifar, S., & Swann, W.B. Jr (2020). *Political Censorship in the Digital Age*. Computational Social Science Laboratory, University of Southern California.
- Ashokkumar, A.** (2020). *What Language Can Tell Us About Group Dynamics*. Social Psychology Area Seminar, Department of Psychology, University of California Davis.
- Pennebaker, J.W. & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2020). *The Psychological Unfolding of the COVID-19 Outbreak*. UT Austin COVID-19 Modeling Consortium, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2020). *The Psychological Unfolding of the COVID-19 Outbreak*. Liberal Arts and Science Academy, Austin ISD.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2020). *Life During a Pandemic: Exploring the Social-Psychological Impacts of COVID*. Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Ozdemir, F., Swann, W.B. Jr. (2019). *When are Conservatives as Tolerant of Refugees as Liberals?* Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Swann, W.B. Jr. (2018). *Restoring Honor by Slapping or Disowning Your Daughter: Towards a Theory of Honor-Based Violence*. Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin
- Talaifar, S. & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2018). *Identity Fusion with University: Predicting Student Well-being & Retention*. Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Swann, W.B. Jr. (2017). *Transcending Dishonor by Slapping or Ostracizing the Daughter*. Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.\***, Viraj, V\*, Ghai, S.\*, Maheshwari, N.\*, & Jaffrelot, C. (2016). *Shared sacred spaces between Hindus and Muslims in India*. Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities (CSH). \*shared first authors

## POSTER PRESENTATIONS

† indicates undergraduate student presenter

Martel, F., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Moniz, P., & Swann Jr, W. B. *Identity Fusion: Threat to Democracy?* (2022). Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), San Francisco.

† Kellogg, A., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Pennebaker, J. *Xenophobia, Conspiracy Theories, and COVID-19*. (2021). Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Virtual.

- † Weyland, A., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Pennebaker, J. *Polarized during a Pandemic: Differences in Social Dynamics between Liberals and Conservatives.* (2021). Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Virtual.
- † Gueorguieva, E., Shah, M., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Pennebaker, J. *Generationality, Concerns and Safety Behaviors During the COVID-19 Pandemic.* (2021). Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Virtual.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J. (2020). *Do Traumatic Events Really Bring People Together?* Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), New Orleans.
- Talaifar, S., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Pennebaker, J., Yeager, D.S., Medrano, F., & Swann, W.B., Jr. (2020). *A New Pathway to College Retention? Identity Fusion with University Predicts Retention Independently of Grades.* Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), New Orleans.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2019). *Tribalism can Corrupt: Why People Denounce or Protect Immoral Group Members.* Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Portland.
- † Weixi, W., & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2019). *Gender Differences During Early Adolescence: Exploring Language from an Online Literary Magazine.* Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Portland.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2018). *Transcending Dishonor by Slapping or Ostracizing the Daughter: Lowering Self-threat Through Violence.* Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), Atlanta.
- † Sarma, S., Swann, W.B., Jr., Talaifar, S., & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2017). *Effects of Fusion with UT and Fusion with Home Country Among International Students.* Psychology Departmental Honors Poster Session, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Chan, K. Q. (2017). *Collective Experiences of Negative Emotion.* Emotion preconference, Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), San Antonio.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, & Chan, K. Q. (2016) *Meaningful Variations in the Better-Than-Average Effect.* Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), San Diego.
- Chan, K. Q. & **Ashokkumar, A.**, (2016) *Gender Differences in Disgust is not Universal, but Sure is Robust.* Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), San Diego.
- Lutsky, N., & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2016) *Better Than Average: Self-evaluations in an Indian Sample.* Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP), San Diego.
- Lutsky, N., Hayward, S., & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2016) *What Frames the Better than Average Effect: Personality, Culture, or Language?* Association of Psychological Science convention (APS), Chicago.

## TEACHING

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### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Spring 2021 | Section Instructor, Psychological Methods/Statistics<br>The University of Texas at Austin                 |
| Spring 2020 | Co-instructor, Writing Workshop<br>Texas Prison Education Initiative, Lockhart Prison, Austin             |
| Spring 2019 | Graduate Teaching Assistant, Development of Attachment Relationships<br>The University of Texas at Austin |
| Fall 2017   | Graduate Teaching Assistant, Social Cognition<br>The University of Texas at Austin                        |
| Spring 2016 | Graduate Teaching Assistant, Statistics and Research Methods II<br>Ashoka University, India               |

- Fall 2015 Graduate Teaching Assistant, Statistics and Research Methods I  
Ashoka University, India
- Spring 2015 Graduate Teaching Assistant, Critical Thinking Seminar in Psychology  
Ashoka University

### INVITED WORKSHOPS & GUEST LECTURES

- Spring 2021 “Topic modeling & other text analysis methods.” University of Texas at Austin
- Spring 2021 “LIWC & dictionary-based text analysis methods.” University of Texas at Austin
- Fall 2020 & 2021 “Scraping social media data” for a graduate class on text analysis in psychology. University of Texas at Austin
- Fall 2017 “Extreme pro-social behaviors in groups” as part of the undergraduate social psychology course. University of Texas at Austin
- Summer 2016 “Introduction to Psychology” to high school students in the Young Scholars Programme. Ashoka University, India

### NON-ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

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- 2019 – 2020 **Research Consultant, Department of Sociology, University of Texas Austin**  
Analyzed email communications with Texas municipal courts to determine biases in responses to requests for public data
- 2012 – 2014 **Software Development Engineer, Microsoft R&D**  
Designed algorithms to improve accuracy in triggering of *BING Shopping*  
Developed an application to publish images to the *BING* repository for *BING*'s new experience  
Designed and developed a data-processing framework for Microsoft product data

### OUTREACH AND SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

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† indicates undergraduate student author

Research featured in USA Today: [“COVID's wrath has left tales of woe: 2 years in, owning those stories is helping some heal”](#)

Interview featured on the *Yours Mindfully* podcast

Interview featured on *Decibel* program of Austin PBS: [“How the pandemic is affecting mental health”](#)

Interview featured on *Good Day Austin* program of Fox Austin: [“Social life changes after COVID-19 and effects on mental health”](#)

Research featured in UT News by the University of Texas at Austin. [“Drastic changes in social lives raise future mental health concerns”](#)

Editor and Author, The Pandemic Project blog: <https://trackingsocial.life/>

“Xenophobia, Conspiracy Theories, and COVID-19”: Kellogg<sup>†</sup>, Ashokkumar, & Pennebaker

“Locked indoors: What we do daily is related to mental health”: Ashokkumar & Pennebaker

“The Unfolding of the COVID Outbreak: The shifts in thinking and feeling”: Ashokkumar & Pennebaker

“Turning inward during crises: How COVID is changing our social ties?” Ashokkumar & Pennebaker

“What Does the Future Hold?”: Pennebaker & Ashokkumar

“A Crisis within a Crisis: BlackLivesMatter, COVID-19, and a New Sense of Purpose”: Mihalcea, Ashokkumar, & Pennebaker

### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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Society for Personality & Social Psychology; Association for Psychological Science

## **SERVICE**

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### **Ad-hoc reviewer**

PNAS, PNAS Nexus, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, American Political Science Review, Behavior Research Methods, Current Directions in Psychological Science, Emotion, Self and Identity, Journal of Language & Social Psychology, PLOS One, Psychological Reports, Appetite, Psychology of Language and Communication, Journal of Open Psychology Data, Journal of Pragmatics, Journal of Medical Internet Research, APS Student Grant Competition

### **Undergraduate Mentorship**

Emily Pencis, Undergraduate Summer Research Assistant (2021)  
 Yarezi Campos, Undergraduate Summer Research Assistant (2021)  
 Weixi Wang, Undergraduate Summer Intern (2017-21)  
 Maria Rivera, Undergraduate SURE Summer Intern (2020)  
 Gabriella Leyva-Montiel, Undergraduate SURE Summer Intern (2020)  
 Alex Kelloggs, Undergraduate Summer Research Assistant (2020)  
 Grace Jumonville, Undergraduate Summer Research Assistant (2020)  
 Darby Edmondson, Undergraduate Summer Research Assistant (2020)  
 Alex Contreas, Undergraduate SURE Summer Intern (2019)  
 Aafreen Chunara, Undergraduate Summer Intern (2018)  
 Meredith Galaif, Undergraduate Research Assistant (2018)  
 Shalini Sarma, Honors Student (2017)  
 Andres Umana, Undergraduate SURE Summer Intern (2017)

### **Other Service**

Graduate Diversity Committee Member (2019 – 2020)  
 International Graduate Student Assembly Member (2018 – 2020)

## **ACADEMIC REFERENCES**

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### ***Robb Willer***

Professor  
 Department of Sociology, Psychology, & Organizational Behavior  
 Stanford University  
 Email: [willer@stanford.edu](mailto:willer@stanford.edu)

### ***William B. Swann, Jr.***

Professor  
 Department of Psychology  
 The University of Texas at Austin  
 Email: [swann@utexas.edu](mailto:swann@utexas.edu)

### ***James W. Pennebaker***

Regents Centennial Professor  
 Department of Psychology  
 The University of Texas at Austin  
 Email: [pennebaker@utexas.edu](mailto:pennebaker@utexas.edu)